

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 02013 261918Z
ACTION PC-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 IGA-02 SY-05 INR-07 CIAE-00

SCA-01 PPT-01 /028 W

-----075769 261940Z /44

P R 261503Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0533

INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

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FOR ACTING PCD HANDWERGER FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC, XJ

SUBJECT: PCV TRAVEL IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. FROM PERSPECTIVE OF BLS COUNTRIES WITH COMBINED PCV CONTINGENT OF ABOUT 400, I AM INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT POTENTIAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING SECURITY RISKS, FACED BY VOLUNTEERS TRAVELING AS TOURISTS IN RHODESIA, MOZAMBIQUE, SOUTH AFRICA, SOUTH WEST AFRICA, AND EASTERN BOTSWANA. THE FOLLOWING REVIEWS OF SITUATION IN EACH COUNTRY HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH CHARGE'S IN LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND AND HAS THE FULL CONCURRENCE OF AMBASSADOR BOWDLER IN PRETORIA, WHO PREPARED PARA 5 BELOW.

2. RHODESIA. AT PRESENT USG POLICY IS TO ADVISE US TRAVELERS NOT TO ENTER RHODESIA. IN ORIENTATION MEETINGS WITH PCVS, WE STRONGLY URGE THEM NOT TO TRAVEL TO RHODESIA. UNFORTUNATELY, A FAIR NUMBER CONTINUE TO DO SO, IN SOME INSTANCES WITHOUT INFORMING THEIR PCD. WHILE WE CANNOT PROHIBIT VOL-
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PAGE 02 GABORO 02013 261918Z

UNTEERS FROM TRAVELING TO RHODESIA, I BELIEVE THE TIME HAS COME TO MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT WHILE PCVS ARE STILL IN THE US, I.E. DURING ORIENTATION AND TRAINING, TO IMPRESS ON THEM THE RISKS AND ABSENCE OF PROTECTION WHILE TRAVELING IN RHODESIA. AS DAILY REPORTS ATTEST, THE SITUATION IS WORSENING. WHITE, ENGLISH-SPEAKING TOURISTS RISK BEING TREATED LIKE WHITE RHODESIANS (OR

WHITE MERCENARIES). TO UNDERLINE THE UNCERTAINTY AND RISKS, EMBASSY MBABANE HAS BEGUN ASKING VOLUNTEERS TO SIGN A STATEMENT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN RHODESIA AND THAT THEY TRAVEL AT THEIR OWN RISK. IN PCVS OWN INTEREST AND TO EMPHASIZE THE WARNING, I SUGGEST PC/W ASK VOLUNTEERS COMING TO BLS COUNTRIES TO SIGN A SIMILAR STATEMENT BEFORE LEAVING WASHINGTON.

3. MOZAMBIQUE. BORDER BETWEEN MOZAMBIQUE AND SWAZILAND REMAINS CLOSED FOR TOURISTS INCLUDING PCVS. MANY OF THE LATTER WOULD LIKE TO TRAVEL TO MAPUTO FOR VACATION. ALL SHOULD BE STRONGLY ADVISED, HOWEVER, NOT TO ATTEMPT ENTRY INTO MOZAMBIQUE WITHOUT WRITTEN VISA, WHICH IS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. VERBAL ASSURANCES THAT VISA HAS BEEN ISSUED ARE NOT ACCEPTED BY GOM BORDER CONTROL OFFICIALS.

4. SOUTH WEST AFRICA (NAMIBIA). WE CONTINUE TO HEAR OF PCVS ASSIGNED TO WESTERN BOTSWANA WHO ARE NOT ADHERING TO STRICT USG INJUNCTIONS AGAINST UNAUTHORIZED TRAVEL IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA/NAMIBIA. PC/W'S ASSISTANCE IS REQUESTED THROUGH ORIENTATION AND TRAINING IN DISCOURAGING PCV TRAVEL TO THAT TERRITORY, ESPECIALLY IN PRESENT ATMOSPHERE OF UNCERTAINTY WHEN PERSONAL SECURITY COULD BECOME A PROBLEM.
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PAGE 03 GABORO 02013 261918Z

5. SOUTH AFRICA. I SUGGEST THAT PC/W, IN CONSULTATION WITH STATE, ASSURE THAT PCV'S ARE WELL AWARE OF THE SIUTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE STATE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THAT COUNTRY. AT PRESENT, THE TENSIONS IN OUR RELATIONS POSE NO UNUSUAL PROBLEMS FOR NORMAL TOURIST TRAVEL IN SOUTH AFRICA, THOUGH THERE CAN BE OCCASIONAL UNPLEASANTNESS AND CONDITIONS COULD DETERIORATE IN THE FUTURE. IRRESPECTIVE OF OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, BLACK PCVS ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN SYSTEM OF INSTITUTIONALIZED DISCRIMINATION. BLACK PCVS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO COMMUNICATE THEIR TRAVEL PLANS TO OUR EMBASSY IN PRETORIA, WHICH CAN THEN BE HELPFUL IN AVERTING SUCH DIFFICULTIES.

6. BOTSWANA. SECURITY SITUATION IN EASTERN BOTSWANA IS GROUNDS FOR INCREASING CONCERN AS EVIDENCED BY RECENT BORDER CLASHES BETWEEN BOTSWANA DEFENSE FORCE AND RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES. PCVS HEADED FOR BLS COUNTRIES SHOULD BE AWARE OF RISKS OF TRAVEL ALONG BOTSWANA/RHODESIA BORDER.

7. ONLY THROUGH JOINT EFFORTS TO ASSURE PCV UNDERSTANDING OF, AND COMPLIANCE WITH, THE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND WARNINGS CONTAINED HEREIN, CAN WE EXPECT TO AVOID UNFORTUNATE INCIDENTS DURING DELICATE AND DIFFICULT TIMES AHEAD IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. YOUR PERSONAL INTEREST AND ASSISTANCE WOULD BE APPRECIATED.
NORLAND

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